

FY 2019
SMALL NEPA PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

Please **do not leave any field BLANK**, unless it does not apply.
 Submit form (Word doc) electronically to jjchynoweth@fs.fed.us by **May 9, 2019**.

(NOTE: Italicized / red comments are for reference only. You may delete them when completing form.)

Project Name	Pre-commercial Thinning
District Name (or "Forestwide")	Palouse RD
County where project located?	Latah
FS Personnel Name, Phone Number and Email <i>If a partnership, please add name, phone and email; however, an FS employee MUST BE the project proponent and point of contact.</i>	Nic Wagner 208-875-1738 nwagner@fs.fed.us
Legal Location <i>Township(s), Range(s), and Section(s) of project.</i>	Multiple stand locations within the Palouse Ranger District (see list of stands at the end of this document with legal locations – pg. 8)
District Ranger / Line Officer's Name <i>Person(s) responsible for signing the decision document</i>	Stefani Spencer
Is the project associated with meeting a Forest target?	Yes (integrated fuels target)
Which CE Category does this project fit? <i>Provide citation: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(x)</i> <i>See below regarding 220.6(d)(x) projects.</i>	36 CFR 22.6(e)(6)
<p>A Project Record or written Decision are <u>not required</u> for projects for 36 CFR 220.6 (d) categories except at the Decision Maker's discretion.</p> <p><i>IF being submitted under 36 CFR 220.6 (d), does the Decision Maker want a written Decision?</i></p> <p>Yes No *</p> <p><i>If no, this form does not need to be filled out nor submitted to the Small NEPA planner.</i></p> <p><i>If yes, provide the category above, complete the remainder of this form and have Decision Maker submit it to the Small NEPA planner.</i></p> <p>* NOTE: All 36 CFR 220.6(e) projects go through the Small NEPA process.</p>	

At what level does the Decision Maker want the project scoped?

Internal ____ External X

Internal scoping will be through the Small NEPA IDT, unless otherwise specified. Scoping would be documented in the Extraordinary Circumstances Checklist.

*External scoping will be with the public via a scoping letter, a legal notice, and the scoping letter posted on the NPCWNF website. The Project will only be scoped to the Tribe(s) et al (see * below), unless otherwise specified.*

Internal scoping will be through the Small NEPA IDT, unless otherwise specified. Scoping would be documented in the Extraordinary Circumstances Checklist.

External scoping will be with the public via a scoping letter, a legal notice, the scoping letter posted on the NPCWNF website, and postcards with a link to the website/scoping letter. The scoping letter/postcards will be mailed to the full NEPA mailing list unless otherwise specified.

Provide a list of the individuals, groups, agencies, etc. (other than those listed below*) with their mailing address and/or email address, of those who will be included for external Scoping.

- DO NOT provide only a name.
- DO NOT leave this box blank: If no additional individuals et al are to be scoped please enter N/A.

Lewis-Clark ATV Club
PO Box 9241
Moscow ID 83843

** The Nez Perce and Coeur d'Alene Tribes will be scoped. The following will also be included for all SN scoping: Friends of the Clearwater, Idaho Conservation League, Thomas E. Peterson and Bill Mulligan.*

What Level of Analysis (below) does the Decision Maker want for the Project?

X **Low level:** If the project's level of public scrutiny is projected to be relatively low or unknown, the line officer chooses who we would contact for scoping (limited). In this case specialists would only do the checklist for each project. Documentation for low level analysis projects would be a completed checklist filled out by the specialists, including the name of the specialist who performed the analysis, the project name, and date it was completed. No other written documentation would be generated.

 Moderate level: If the project's level of public scrutiny is projected to be relatively moderate to high, then the line officer chooses who we would contact for scoping (a little broader). In this case, specialists would complete the checklist with the only write up being for items that are present and the rationale for the effects call. No write up would be given for items in the checklist that are not present. If the determination is no effect (which generally speaking, most CE's should have zero to very little adverse effects), then document why that determination was made in one paragraph or less. If the determination is an adverse effect, then why that determination was made would be written in less three paragraphs.

List the Management Area(s) in which your project is located.

Palouse RD - E1 Management Area

What are the desired conditions (*relevant to your project*) for the Management Area(s) listed above?

Management Area E1 Goals: Provide optimum, sustained production of wood products. Timber production is to be cost effective and provide adequate protection of soil and water quality. Manage viable elk populations within areas of historic elk use based on physiological and ecological needs. Manage a range of water quality and fish habitat potential from high fishable in several of the key anadromous and resident fish streams to a low fishable in the Palouse District and portions of the Pierce District.

Desired conditions are described in Chapters 2 & 3 of the Nez Perce and Clearwater Forest Plans.

Is the project in an Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA)? Yes* **No**

If yes, which one?

** Fill in the 'Project in Roadless Area' table below, **AND** complete a Briefing Paper - note map requirements. Provide the completed Briefing Paper to the Environmental Coordinator and Brian Riggers prior to scoping.*

Is the project in a congressionally designated area, ex. Wilderness Area, Wild & Scenic River Corridor, Research Natural Area, Historic Trail, etc.? Yes* **No**

If yes, which one(s)?

** Please contact Carol Hennessey, cahennessey@fs.fed.us, 935-4270, **BEFORE** submitting this proposal, to discuss how the project may affect the designated area.*

** For projects that occur in the **Lolo Trail National Historic Landmark**, please contact Steve Lucas, slucas@fs.fed.us, 208-983-4040, **BEFORE** submitting this proposal, to discuss how the project may affect the designated area.*

Are there Floodplains or Wetlands in the project area? Yes No **UNKNOWN**

Are there Municipal Watersheds in the project area? Yes **No**

If yes, which one?

Is the project located in an RHCA? Yes **No**

What is the Purpose and Need for the proposed action*?

This project would thin trees in stands that have been identified as overstocked with conifer seedlings and saplings. These treatments would occur in young forest stands which have resulted from regeneration harvests in the last 15 to 25 years. Conifer trees at this stage are fairly well established and have developed enough to indicate which trees are the most dominant and most desirable. The size of the trees that are cut down will be smaller if the thinning occurs at this age and size. This will reduce the amount of thinning slash left on the ground; smaller sized slash and smaller amounts of slash will break down faster so the fire hazard is reduced more quickly.

The objective of the treatment is to reduce stand density and to concentrate growth on the more desirable trees. This would also improve the overall health, structure and vigor of the stand by removing undesirable trees and retaining the dominant and codominant trees of the best quality. The species composition of the target stands would shift to a greater component of species such as western white pine, western larch and ponderosa pine which are more resistant to root disease and stem decay. Western larch and ponderosa pine are also more fire-tolerant.

This project would also have the following benefits:

- Accelerate the diameter and height growth on the remaining selected trees in order to increase future timber yield potential and to accelerate successional development to the larger size classes.
- Improve the vigor of the remaining trees to make them more resistant to insect and disease attacks and less vulnerable to ice and snow damage and thereby promote long-term forest health and resiliency.
- Maintain and promote shade intolerant species. The shade intolerant seral species generally tend to be more fire resistant and longer-lived than the shade tolerant species.
- Increase the amount of sunlight to the ground and sustain the diversity of early seral vegetation species including those browse species important to big game and to also lengthen the time period that this forage would otherwise be available.
- Reduce the long-term fire hazard conditions in the stands to be treated and to the adjacent forest stands by:
 - By reducing the ladder fuel hazard and the potential fuel buildup from future stem exclusion tree mortality.
 - By creating a break in the continuity of standing dense ladder fuels across the landscape.

** The purpose and need describes: Why the action being proposed at this location at this time (the problem/the need for the action?). And the desired goal/outcome (the purpose) of the action.*

Describe the Existing Condition of the project area.

These previously harvested stands are overstocked with seedling and sapling sized conifer tree species. Stocking levels range from approximately 800 to over 4000 stems per acre. Less desirable species like Douglas-fir, grand-fir, western hemlock, and lodgepole pine produce cones and seeds at more regular intervals and at higher numbers than more desirable species like western larch, western white pine and ponderosa pine. This leads to overstocking of the less desirable species. High tree densities increase competition for available resources and reduce tree growth. Species such as Douglas-fir, western hemlock, and grand fir are more susceptible to root disease and stem decay. The stands have a component of damaged, diseased, defective and suppressed trees which result in stands with overall poor health, vigor and structure.

Describe the Proposed Action.

What is provided will be used in the Scoping Letter (*external only*), by the resource specialists for their effects analyses, and in the Decision document.

This project would thin trees on approximately 526 acres in 36 stands on the Palouse Ranger District. The estimated timeframe for the thinning treatments is from 2020 to 2024. Thinning work occurs during the year from approximately May to October and the work could occur throughout this timeframe.

The work will be completed primarily by contract crews under the oversight of Forest Service personnel. Some tree thinning will be completed by Forest Service personnel.

All work would be done by hand using chainsaws; no mechanical equipment will be used.

There will be no ground disturbing activities associated with this project.

The spacing of the trees left from the thinning treatment will vary from stand to stand. The species of trees selected to leave would favor western white pine, western larch and ponderosa pine. The thinning spacing and the tree species to leave will be determined by the site conditions of each stand. The prescribed spacing will be an average and the spacing between trees will vary so the leave trees will be selected to meet the objectives of each prescription.

The majority of the trees to be cut will be less than 7 inches in diameter. Trees that are cut down maybe cut into smaller lengths or have branches cut off so the slash will be closer to the ground which will help the slash to break down faster.

No burning would occur in the stands after thinning nor would any further mechanical slash treatment be done.

Only existing roads would be used to provide access to the sites. All trees that are felled across any Forest road or trail would be removed. The project does not change access restrictions.

While thinning units may have inclusions of RHCA, no precommercial thinning would occur within a RHCA.

Again, please provide a narrative description of the Proposed Action.

List the Design Criteria / Mitigation Measures * to be included with the Proposed Action.

Mitigation Measures: It is assumed there are no significant effects that need to be mitigated.

** Additional Design Criteria/Measures can be listed under "Additional Information" on the last page of this form*

Small NEPA IDT/resource specialists are listed below. Contact them if you have any questions regarding their resource for your project.

Botany – Mike Hays, mhays01@fs.fed.us; 983-4028

Fisheries – Derrick Bawdon, dbawdon@fs.fed.us; 963-4211

Heritage – Steve Lucas, slucas@fs.fed.us; 983-4040

Hydrology – Cynthia Valle, cvalle@fs.fed.us; 963-4203

Minerals – Marty Jones, martinjones@fs.fed.us; 983-5158

Recreation – Carol Hennessey, cahennessey@fs.fed.us; 935-4270

Soils – Alex Rozin, alexandraroizin@fs.fed.us; 842-2100

Wild and Scenic River – Chris Noyes, chnoyes@fs.fed.us; 935-4251

Wildlife – Jim Lutes, jamesrlutes@fs.fed.us; 963-4202

PROJECT MAPS

Please send – separate from this form and per the instructions outlined below – a GIS-generated map or maps of the project area (pdf format only) with the project submission email.

- Make sure that the map layers can be turned on / off / are editable.
- Make sure the map(s) fits on an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper.

Provide at least one map, preferably “portrait” orientation, with the project area / features as:

- a Point, e.g. culvert, bridge, etc.,
- a Line, e.g. fence, road, creek, etc., and/or
- a Polygon, e.g. stand boundaries, treatment areas, etc.
 - Do not use a point if treating an area, use a polygon.
 - Points/lines/polygons need to be distinct and easily found on the map.
 - The project area / site needs to be centered on the map, especially if only one area/feature.

Please use the Forest Visitor Map as your map’s base layer.

- Do not add contour lines to the FV map unless needed for clarifying the proposed action. Contour lines can make the map difficult to read.
 - If contour lines are needed, make sure they are distinguishable from other linear features such as roads, trails, streams, etc.
- A topo map can be substituted for the FV map. If using a topo map but the contour lines are not important the topo lines should be light gray or opaque.
- Regardless of base map, make sure there are identifiable elements, e.g. towns, roads, streams, etc. on the map to help locate the project area on the landscape and that the elements are clearly labeled.

The preferred map scale (typically 1:24K) is whatever scale best presents the project area’s location and proposed activities:

- If the 1:24K scale is too small (i.e. the project feature(s) – point/line/polygon – would be hard to find or would be indistinguishable on just one map), use a larger scale to show the overall project area (coarse scale map) and smaller scaled maps to show the project features (fine scale map).
- If the 1:24K scale is too big (i.e. the project feature is a tiny point or thin line lost/hard to find on the larger landscape), use a smaller scale to highlight the feature while ensuring there are elements on the map to identify the project’s location.
- If you need to make additional maps, please make as few as possible.

At a minimum, all maps should include (with the preferred but not set in stone location on the map):

- a Title (project name and district name only (please); centered at top)
- a Legend (features clearly labeled; lower right corner)
- a Scale (in half mile, e.g. 0__0.25__0.5 miles, or full miles, e.g. 0__0.25__0.5__1.0 miles; lower left corner)
- a North Arrow (upper right corner)
 - Display all of the above in boxes with black outlines and a white backgrounds (not gray or yellow)
 - Do not ‘Halo’ the text or numbers or anything else on the map. Please.
 - The Scale needs to be large enough to read the numbers.

Finally, please include the mapmakers name and the date it was created on the map.

The Map(s) you provide will be used for Scoping the Public and the Tribes and in the Decision document. Please make sure they show – clearly, effectively, and professionally – what activity or activities are being proposed and where they are located on the Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forests.

SHAPEFILES

The resource specialists require the shapefile(s) of the project's proposed activities before they will conduct their analyses. Providing the shapefile does not substitute for providing a pdf map.

The Project Proponent needs to send the shapefile, or a location where the shapefile can be found, to the Small NEPA Planner (currently: jjchynoweth@fs.fed.us) by the time or shortly after the District Ranger submits this form.

- Shapefiles need to include the Project Name and have the Feature (culvert, bridge, etc.) labeled.
- Shapefiles need to include the following extensions – .dbf, .prj, .sbn, .shp, .shx, and .xml.

PROPONENT: When submitting the shapefile(s) you must include in the email how the location(s) of the project feature(s), i.e. line, point, and/or polygon, were determined (see below):

- Field-collected GPS data;
- From existing corporate GIS data (provide name of GIS layer);
- Created (digitized) from an aerial photo;
- Created (digitized) from the existing corporate GIS data;
- Created (digitized) from the NPCLW Visitor Map;
- Other (describe).

JC : 4/1/2019

Additional Information:

Area No.	SUID No.	Acre s	Tow n ship	Range	Section	Count y	District	Thinning portion of stand outside RNA, RA or Historic Trail?	In Wild & Scenic River Corridor ?
1	010502A520300049000	60	42N	4W	13	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
2	010502A540200052000	16	42N	4W	1	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
3	010502A580100060000	39	42N	4W	13	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
4	010502A590300034000	39	42N	1W	1,6	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
5	010502A600100035000	8	42N	2W	24	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
6	010502A600100036000	31	42N	2W	24	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
7	010502A600200027000	10	42N	1W	18	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
8	010502A600200030000	16	42N	1W	18	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
9	010502A600400037000	30	42N	1W	5	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
10	010502A600400040000	41	42N	1W	8,9	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
11	010502A620100024000	8	42N	2W	32	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
12	010502A640100014000	6	41N	1W	28	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
13	010502A640100015000	5	41N	1W	28	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
14	010502A790500065000	38	41N	1W	12	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
15	010502A800100043000	4	42N	1E	32	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
16	010502A800100044000	5	42N	1E	32	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
17	010502A800100046000	4	42N	1E	32	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
18	010502A800100048000	2	41N	1E	6	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
19	010502A800100049000	9	41N	1E	6	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
20	010502A800100051000	4	41N	1E	6	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
21	010502A800100052000	14	41N	1E	6	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
22	010502A800100053000	5	41N	1E	7	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
23	010502A800100054000	11	41N	1E	7	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
24	010502A800100056000	13	41N	1E	7	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
25	010502A800100057000	8	41N	1E	7	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
26	010502A800100058000	7	41N	1E	7	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
27	010502A800100059000	5	41N	1E	7	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
28	010502A800100060000	5	41N	1E	8	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
29	010502A800100061000	7	41N	1E	7	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
30	010502A800100062000	16	41N	1E	7	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
31	010502A800100063000	25	41N	1E	7	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
32	010502A800100064000	4	41N	1E	7	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
33	010502A800200044000	6	41N	1E	8	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
34	010502A800200045000	11	41N	1E	8	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
35	010502A800300031000	8	41N	1E	9	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
36	010502A800300032000	6	41N	1E	9	Latah	Palouse	YES	NO
		526							